

## Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 251757Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4391

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5660

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS DIA AND SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, PO

SUBJECT: ANGOLAN AIRLIFT: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

1. IN AN UNUSUAL DEPARTURE FROM PROTOCOL, GENERAL PINHO FREIRE, MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND CHIEF OF THE 1ST AIR REGION, INVITED THE DATT TO LUNCH AT THE AIR FORCE MESS AT MONSANTO TODAY TO "DISCUSS A NUMBER OF MATTERS." EVEN MORE UNUSUAL WAS THE FACT THAT LUNCH WAS JOINED BY MAJOR COSTA NEVES, AIR FORCE MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, COL PAULINO CORREIA, A LONG-TIME CONTACT OF THE DATT AND CHIEF OF A REORGANIZATION STUDY FOR THE AIR FORCE, AND SUB-LT CUNHA, AN AIR FORCE MEMBER OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

2. THROUGHOUT THE LUNCH, THIS GROUP DISCUSSED FREELY PERSONALITIES INCLUDING ADM ROSA COUTINHO AND GEN OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO, THE PRESIDENCY, THE NAVY, INJUSTICES OF IMPRISONMENT, AND THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH FACE PORTUGAL AND THE 6TH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT (SEPTEL).

3. THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE MEETING WAS REVEALED WHEN PINHO FREIRE MADE A FORMAL VERBAL REQUEST, WHICH HE PROPOSED TO FOLLOW UP WITH A WRITTEN REQUEST AND CONTACT BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER ANTUNES AND THE AMBASSADOR ON THIS SUBJECT.

4. PINHO FREIRE PROPOSES AN AIRLIFT OF THE REMAINING  
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50,000 NOVA LISBOA REFUGEES TO WINDHOEK (2230S 01700E),

BY THE US CONTRACT CARRIERS PRESENTLY PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES (ABOUT A ONE-HOUR FLIGHT). FREIRE ENVISIONS MULTIPLE FLIGHTS BY EACH AIRCRAFT WITH MINIMUM GROUND TIME AND ABSOLUTELY NO PAPERWORK FORMALITIES. FROM WINDHOEK, HE PROPOSES USAF C-141 OR C-5 FLIGHTS TO PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE BASES IN PORTUGAL, I.E. MONTIJO, BEJA, MONTE REAL, ETC. UNTIL ALL OF THE EVACUEES FROM NOVA LISBOA ARE TRANSSHIPPED. HE IS THINKING IN TERMS OF A MINIMUM OF 20 AIRCRAFT PER DAY. FREIRE'S RATIONALE IS AS FOLLOWS:

5. THE USG IS RELUCTANT TO PUT US MILITARY AIRCRAFT INTO ANGOLA FOR POLITICAL REASONS. AN ADDITIONAL CONSTRAINT HAS BEEN THE INEFFICIENCY OF TAP AND THE POTENTIAL INSECURITY OF THE AREA. HE PROPOSES TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM ON A STRICTLY AIR FORCE TO AIR FORCE BASIS WITH UP TO 500 PARACHUTISTS SECURING NOVA LISBOA IF NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE REFUGEES. HE VIEWS THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE AMBASSADOR AS A NECESSARY DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE AND SAYS THAT HE HAS THE FULL APPROVAL OF MELO ANTUNES FOR THIS PROPOSAL AND THAT MELO ANTUNES WILL FOLLOW UP WITH A DIPLOMATIC NOTE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE LEGAL BASIS FOR WHAT FREIRE DESCRIBES AS A HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT OF ANGOLANS WHO FACE SERIOUS PRIVATION IN THE NOVA LISBOA AREA. THESE PEOPLE WILL, HE SAID, "BE THE TRULY UNDERPRIVILEGED WHO WILL COME TO THE AIRCRAFT WITH NO MORE THAN THE CLOTHES ON THEIR BACKS AND PERHAPS A SUITCASE WITH ALL THEIR WORLDLY POSSESSIONS." FREIRE INDICATED THAT YESTERDAY, IN AN INFORMAL MEETING WITH ANTUNES AND A NUMBER OF THE MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, THEY COMPLETELY DESPAIRED OF A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF EXTRACTING THE REMAINING REFUGEES FROM NOVA LISBOA IN A POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE TIME-FRAME. AT THAT POINT, FREIRE CONCEIVED THE AIRLIFT IDEA EXPRESSED ABOVE AND WITH THE BLESSING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, CONTACTED THE DATT AS THE SENIOR USAF REPRESENTATIVE IN PORTUGAL.

6. COMMENT: IT WAS EVIDENT FROM FREIRE'S MANNER THAT THIS PROPOSAL HAS GREAT POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE AMONG THE MODERATE OFFICERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THE SOLIDARITY WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PORTUGAL. IT WAS IMPLIED BY FREIRE THAT THE SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF

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THIS MISSION WOULD HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPACT ON THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND THE UNITED STATES. PINHO FREIRE HAS SURVIVED THE POLITICAL INFIGHTING IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL SINCE SEPT 28, 1974 AND IS CONSIDERED A RALLYING POINT FOR THE MORE MODERATE AND DEMOCRATIC OFFICERS OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT.

7. DATT HEARD PINHO FREIRE OUT; MADE NO COMMITMENTS; SAID

HE WOULD TRANSMIT REQUEST ASAP.

8. EMBASSY COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.  
OKUN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DIA AND SECDEF.

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## Message Attributes

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